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## Closing the Achievement Gap

*by Honey L. Poole, James Garfield Elementary, IPS School 31*

**V**ision. Focus. Plan. Unpack standards. Analyze data. Screen. Diagnosis. Intervene. Benchmark. Differentiate. Assess. Collaborative planning. Targeted staff development. These are all critical vocabulary for building capacity to institutionalize change that will make a difference for ALL children.

It is not enough to “know” the standards and indicators and to teach to them. We must learn how to know each student, what is proficiency for his/her grade level, and assess where each child is performing. After this data is gathered, goals are established and progress is monitored; then scientifically based research interventions are implemented. If continuous progress is not made, intervention strategies are rethought and different approaches need to be considered.

Building the capacity to think differently (for example: having “planned lessons” rather than lesson plans) demands a tactical and strategic professional development plan. Not only did we need to understand our diverse population and learn what strategies were most effective with each group, but we also needed a process to meaningfully and effectively disaggregate and analyze data for each sub group. We began with Ruby Payne’s A Framework for Understanding Poverty. While chapters were being discussed in staff meetings we also began learning about unpacking standards, critical vocabulary, and proficiency levels. When data was analyzed we began to see patterns where subgroups were consistently missing the same types of questions or not responding at the expected level of proficiency. We then knew WE had gaps in our instruction. Back to the standards and indicators — “unpacking” them during summer workshops, staff meetings, and collaborative grade level meetings — wherever we would come together as a group. We learned a common vocabulary and also that the vocabulary must be taught to the students, along with providing them with an understanding of what proficiency LOOKED LIKE at their grade level.

We then profiled each class. This was followed by learning best practices and designing interventions that “fit the needs” of each child. Uninterrupted reading block time was essential; establishing a 30-minute intervention time outside the sacrosanct reading block was imperative. Frequent monitoring and making time for collaborative intervention meetings to determine WHY a child was not reaching established goals and WHAT should be tried next was equally as powerful in making a difference.

Leadership had to understand the need for uninterrupted blocks of time and scheduling support staff in a more

*(continued on page 5)*





**OPENING MINDS to Closing the Gap**  
**January 24-25, 2005**



**Don't Wait! Seats are Filling Quickly!**

**WINTER CONFERENCE**

**OPENING MINDS**  
to Closing the Gap



**LORRAINE  
MONROE**

Dr. Monroe is the founder of the Lorraine Monroe Institute, founder and principal of the Frederick Douglas Academy, and author of *Nothing's Impossible: Leadership Lessons from Inside and Outside the Classroom*. More information about Dr. Monroe can be found at [www.lorrainemonroe.com](http://www.lorrainemonroe.com)



**PEDRO  
NOGUERA**

Dr. Pedro Noguera is a professor at NYU and an urban sociologist who focuses on the ways in which schools are influenced by social and economic conditions. He presents a dynamic and profound perspective on the issues of racial inequality and diversity in our schools. More information about Dr. Noguera can be found at [www.thelavinagency.com/usa/pedronoguera.html](http://www.thelavinagency.com/usa/pedronoguera.html)

Please visit the IPLA website at  
[www.doe.state.in.us/ipla](http://www.doe.state.in.us/ipla)  
to view the agenda and conference details.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ IPLA Group Number \_\_\_\_\_  
(if applicable)

First Name for Name Tag \_\_\_\_\_

Position: ☐ Principal ☐ Teacher ☐ Superintendent ☐ Other  
(check one)

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Corp/Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Corporation Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Registration**

**Regular Registration**

**\$150**

This covers the cost of registration,  
a continental breakfast on Day 1,  
and a buffet breakfast on Day 2.

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**CRU Request**

If you are interested in receiving 8 CRUs  
for this conference please provide  
your Social Security Number below.

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Please check method  
of payment.

☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to:  
IPLA Alumni Association

**Registration Deadline is January 21, 2005**

**No Refunds After January 23, 2005**

Please indicate that you are a participant at the IPLA Winter Conference  
to receive block room rates at the Sheraton.

**Hotel reservations must be made by January 7, 2005**

Mail registration form to:

**Krista Orton - IPLA - Room 229, State House - Indianapolis, IN 46204**  
Telephone: (317) 232-9004 Fax: (317) 232-9005





## Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Improve Reading Skills with Existing Resources

*Martha Meyer, Ph.D., Professor in Special Education, Butler University, Indianapolis, IN*

In order to address achievement gaps for special needs students, administrators must identify basic successful strategies that can be applied consistently by all teachers using existing resources already in place.

When students struggle with reading skills and basic mathematical concepts, an achievement gap between these students and their peers will soon emerge. Therefore, schools should address these two critical areas first before attacking other areas within this multifaceted problem. There is a misconception that raising achievement performance will require hiring many aides for one-on-one instruction, purchasing expensive technology, and “drilling and killing” until students can perform required tasks. Actually, following simple reading and mathematics strategies, along with being vigilant in both saturation and consistency in their application, will efficiently increase achievement for the majority of K-12 students with special needs. This article addresses one of the “best kept secrets” in the teaching of reading that will result in improved reading skills transferable in standards-based school curricula, especially in enhanced word recognition, vocabulary, and both fluency and comprehension. It is also a strategy that can be applied in the majority of homes; this will strengthen ties with parents that will empower them to help their children.

Closed-captioned videotape and television programming have been available for several decades. Still, most educators believe it is used for students with hearing impairment, since it was developed for these special needs. However, as captioned materials became more readily available, we have learned that ESL students and those with Learning Disabilities, with a specific disability in reading, can greatly benefit by watching videotapes and television programming with the captioned text capability activated. Even students without special needs improve retention and do better on examinations assessing content of videotapes, television programs, or website

material that is text activated. This strategy is good for all students.

Why does this work? Researchers believe students can now hear the words, see the context of the words, and can then finally read the words. Even children with mild intellectual disabilities can view a short captioned videotape several times and recognize and read entire sentences out of context of the videotape. Seeing activated text material more than once increases retention and fortifies learned reading skills. As students gain reading skills, they transfer these skills to more traditional academic materials, and achievement gains consistently emerge. Reading can then become a social event rather than just an academic chore, one that children with special needs try to avoid due to frustration and lack of success. As skills increase, so do confidence and desire to read for both academic and social success.

Using captioned materials isn’t a perfect strategy. Administrators and teachers should choose captioned materials that do not race through captioned text at an Indy 500 pace, where the text is at the bottom of the videotape or television show, and the text is synchronized with the audio sound. PBS materials are generally good, as are programs on the Discovery channel. Disney videos are successful for elementary children. Special needs students enjoy captioned text television commercials, especially ones that are set to music and are repetitious.

Virtually all schools have TV/VCR or DVD players that provide access to captioned text merely by activating this capability on the television monitor. Many websites also have text activation capability. Look for a site being “Bobby Approved.” If all teachers respond to this strategy for videotaped materials, Channel One programming, etc., the students will have consistent saturation throughout their school day that will translate into improved basic reading skills and lasting achievement. The “Gap” can, and will, close.



## BOOKS FOR LEADERS

### Closing the Achievement Gap:

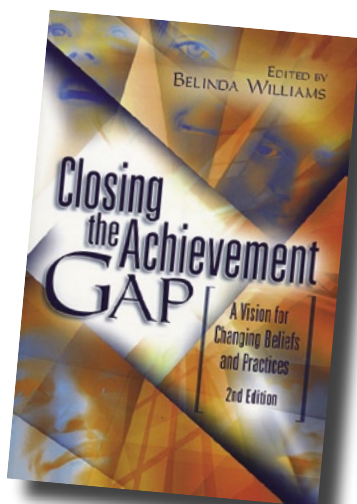
#### A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices

by Belinda Williams,

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Compiled and edited by Belinda Williams, and now in an updated and revised second edition, *Closing The Achievement Gap: A Vision For Changing Beliefs And Practices* focuses on the necessity for educators becoming more sensitive to the worldviews of disadvantaged students and incorporating this awareness into their curriculums and teaching strategies for such students. The contributors persuasively argue that teachers, principals, and policy makers must learn about cultural perceptions of human development; apply this knowledge to professional development and comprehensive reform; and then aligning political and educational policies accordingly. Very strongly recommended reading for the frontline classroom teacher, *Closing The Achievement Gap* also offers specific suggestions for bridging the cultural divide through vocabulary instructions, opportunity-to-learn strategies, and school-level organizational reform.

—Midwest Book Review



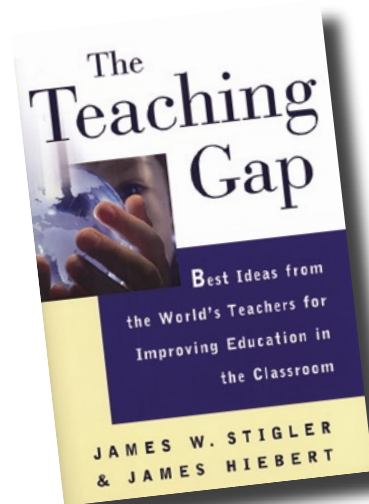
### The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas from the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom

by James W. Stigler, James Hiebert

Comparing math teaching practices in Japan and Germany with those in the United States, two leading researchers offer a surprising new view of teaching and a bold action plan for improving education inside the American classroom.

For years our schools and children have lagged behind international standards in reading, arithmetic, and most other areas of academic achievement. It is no secret that American schools are in dire need of improvement, and that education has become our nation's number-one priority. But even though almost every state in the country is working to develop higher standards for what students should be learning, along with the means for assessing their progress, the quick-fix solutions implemented so far haven't had a noticeable impact.

The problem, as James Stigler and James Hiebert explain, is that most efforts to improve education fail because they simply don't have any impact on the quality of teaching inside classrooms. Teaching, they argue, is cultural. American teachers aren't incompetent, but the methods they use are severely limited, and American teaching has no system in place for getting better. It is teaching, not teachers, that must be changed.



POOLE continued from page 1

effective, intentional manner so that optimal support would be provided in small groups if they were to be effective. This made possible for Title I, Special Ed and Reading First teachers to be working within the designated 30 minute intervention blocks to assist those most at risk in small groups. Resources had to be secured through grants, community partnerships, and, yes, persuasive meetings with central office. Leadership's role is to support teacher needs; if they are carriers of the vision, they must provide a clear path for staff to achieve the vision.

We have been diligently working toward our vision of all children meeting or exceeding state standards for more than 2 ½ years. As we move closer to achieving our goal we realize there is still even more to be learned. We are committed to our children. Our results indicate our perseverance and dedication, along with our new knowledge and continual search for a better way is, indeed, helping close the gap.

*Plan your work,  
then work your plan.*

Jay Virgil Mayhugh





# The Achievement Gap

*An editorial view from a new hire.*



The Achievement Gap has been well documented in recent years, both here in Indiana and across the nation. As a result, many of the contributing-factors related to the achievement gap have been identified and educational agencies throughout the country are working to direct resources and implement strategies that address this complex issue.

Reducing and eventually eliminating the achievement gap is clearly a formidable – but not insurmountable – challenge. As stated by Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Suellen Reed, “Experience has shown us that when we raise standards, students rise to meet the challenge with the help of educators and their families. Through high expectations, great teaching, regular assessments to measure progress, and a focus on accountability at the federal, state, and the local levels, we are seeing results in Indiana.”

As part of these efforts, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is developing a public database specifically designed to provide technical assistance to Indiana schools that are in School Improvement Status under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The IDOE Technical Assistance Database would allow schools in Improvement Status to find and utilize resources available through IDOE and

outside professional providers at their discretion.

How do I know this? I was recently hired by the IDOE to aid and support schools that are having difficulty making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

During my initial days of employment back in August, I had the opportunity to participate in a national conference call that included Department of Education Representatives from all fifty states. Coordinated by the National Educational Representative from Washington D.C., the call was initiated as part of a collaborative effort to establish a network for sharing experiences, solutions, and successes between states. Though each state certainly has its own unique set of challenges, Indiana appears to be among those that are making researched-based strides towards eliminating the achievement gap. As we work to continue this progress, Indiana is displaying its expertise and passion for providing enhanced choices, resources, and assistance to ensure that, indeed, no child is left behind.

If you would like more information on how to become a part of the Technical Assistance Data Base for School Improvement, please contact: Jeff Barber, Department Chair – Technical Assistance Program, IDOE at 317-232-9143; or [jbarber@doe.state.in.us](mailto:jbarber@doe.state.in.us)

Jeff Dunasky, Indiana Department of Education, Center for School Improvement and Performance, 317-232-9141; [jdunasky@doe.state.in.us](mailto:jdunasky@doe.state.in.us)



## Indiana Department of Education Resources **NEED HELP? JUST ASK!**

### Division of Language Minority and Migrant Programs

(317) 232-0555

(800) 382-9962

[www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp](http://www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp)

The Indiana Department of Education, Division of Language Minority and Migrant Programs, is responsible for providing technical assistance to local education agencies, parents, and others requesting information on developing programs to serve language minority students. The Division also administers the Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program; the Title III: English Language Acquisition for Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Immigrant Students Program, the Refugee School Impact Program; and State funding through the Non-English Speaking Program.

### **TITLE III, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR LEP AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS:**

The Title III program provides funding for local school corporations to develop language education instructional programs to assist LEP students in attaining English proficiency and meeting State academic content standards.

The Division has also implemented **No Child Left Behind Act** requirements including the establishment of the K-12 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, the development of ISTAR, an alternate academic assessment for LEP students, and the development of an instrument for English language proficiency assessment. The Division sponsors an annual K-12 ESL conference each spring and staff is available to provide inservices at local schools on second language acquisition, cultural adaptation, and mainstream classroom instructional strategies.

### **TITLE I, PART C, MIGRANT EDUCATION:**

The Indiana Migrant Education Program (IMEP) enables the unique needs of migrant children to be met through instructional and support services through collaboration with other agencies. Each year over 13,000 migrant students receive the Division's supplemental instructional services through 10-12 summer projects and 30-35 regular school year projects in addition to a statewide tutorial program. The division's tutors travel to migrant camps to assist students with oral language and content areas skills

linked closely with those in the student's home states. Students' education and health records are transferred to each new school in accordance with federal requirements.

The Indiana Migrant Education Program serves children of migratory farmworkers who qualify under several eligibility criteria. Children must not have graduated from high school or have a GED and be between the ages of three through twenty one. In order to receive the services of this program, a member of the division staff must complete a Certificate of Eligibility for each student.

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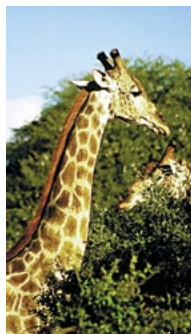
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Phone: (765) 865-2660

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# C A L E N D A R

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|                              |   |
| <b>November 17, 2004</b>     | Bob Eaker – Building a Professional<br>Learning Community                       |
| <b>November 17-18, 2004</b>  | Groups 40 and 41 Sessions<br>Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel<br>and Suites          |
| <b>January 25-26, 2005</b>   | 15th Annual IPLA Winter Conference<br>Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel<br>and Suites |
| <b>February 11-12,, 2005</b> | Groups 40 and 41 Sessions<br>Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel<br>and Suites          |

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